ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A system and method for providing data-triggered workflow management. In one aspect, a data-triggered process definition language is employed, wherein each activity specified in a preferred process definition language is permitted to be enacted whenever a specified combination of data conditions (the *permitted* rule) is met, regardless of which activities have previously been enacted. Further, an activity is scheduled for enactment when a stricter combination of data conditions become true (the *schedule* rule). A data-triggered workflow engine utilizes a current state of a process instance, the permitted and schedule rules, an activity network, and additional attributes of activities to schedule the enactment of activities. In contrast to conventional process definition languages, however, an activity network does not completely prescribe the enactment order, but rather controls what enactment order the data-triggered workflow engine will *suggest* to a participant: the engine computes attributes of activities that suggest an order in which to enact the activities, based on the information it has. A participant, however, may select a different order based on other information, and can even enact activities that have not been scheduled. The data-triggered engine

does not assume that a suggested order has been followed, but rather responds to each activity enactment event (e.g. start, finish, cancel) by revising the suggested enactment order.